

[http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/021307/opl\\_7952571.shtml](http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/021307/opl_7952571.shtml)

Last modified Tue., February 13, 2007 - 01:38 PM  
Originally created Tuesday, February 13, 2007

## **NAVAL HOSPITAL: Perspective is needed for facility**

Jacksonville is fortunate to have access to world-class health care in Northeast Florida.

One critical, yet often-ignored, component of this extraordinary system is our much maligned Jacksonville Naval Hospital.

It is disappointing how efforts to represent the legal rights of military dependents has vastly overshadowed the vital role this hospital and related area clinics play in our community.

The Naval Hospital services a six-state region that includes 214,000 beneficiaries, with the majority residing in Duval County.

Despite reports of the unfortunate adverse outcomes for several dependents, there has been no mention in recent reports that the Naval Hospital is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations, the gold standard for health care organizations' accreditation.

In fact, this commission cited no requirements for improvement in 2005, nor during a second survey in 2006 requested by the Naval Hospital commanding officer to specifically assess the hospital's potential for incurring acts of omission that might constitute breaches of patient safety or medical negligence.

This same commanding officer has been honest and forthright with Navy beneficiaries, their families, legal representatives and the community from the first day she stepped into a proverbial legal "hornet's nest" nearly two years ago.

The total patient caseload at the hospital in 2002 to 2006 equaled: 28,187 admissions; 2.2 million outpatient visits; 24,149 surgical procedures; and 208,052 emergency room visits. During that same time, only one trial has been lost. By national and statistical standards, this equates to exceptional performance.

Fifty percent of the hospital physicians exiting the military each year remain in our community.

Ten percent to 15 percent of Duval County Medical Society members received some, if not all, of their professional medical training in the military health care system.

The hospital is an integral partner in the Northeast Florida/Southeast Georgia disaster preparedness network, ready to support our local hospitals and regional medical infrastructure during natural disasters or biological and chemical acts of terrorism.

The Naval Hospital has been providing quality health care in the Jacksonville community for 66 years. Salaries for the hospital and area branch clinics alone total over \$147 million annually, not to mention other projects that support private businesses (e.g., the current \$44 million hospital expansion/renovation).

The Duval County Medical Society and its over 2,000 physician members are proud to have a close working relationship with our colleagues at the Naval Hospital.

We recognize the critically important role they play in keeping our community healthy. We simply ask that you do the same.

**JOHN M. MONTGOMERY, M.D., president, Duval County Medical Society, Jacksonville**